

**Attachment—Additional Questions for the Record**

**Subcommittee on Health  
Hearing on  
“Combating an Epidemic: Legislation to Help Patients with Substance Use Disorders”  
March 3, 2020**

**Patty McCarthy  
Chief Executive Officer  
Faces & Voices of Recovery**

**The Honorable Frank Pallone, Jr. (D-NJ)**

1. You talk about state opioid response grants in your testimony but also state that funding for recovery support services remains a small portion of federal support. How can the federal government support the recovery community?

**Response from Patty McCarthy, Chief Executive Officer, Faces & Voices of Recovery**

1. Congress can support the recovery community by passing legislation requiring that 20% of State Opioid Response grant funding and 20% of the Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment (SAPT) Block Grant be set-aside for recovery support services provided by authentic recovery community organizations. The Block grant is the primary source of funding for States to address addiction through prevention, treatment and recovery support services.

In March 2020, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Office of the Inspector General released a report on the State Targeted Response grant program and how the grant funds were spent.

<https://oig.hhs.gov/oei/reports/oei-BL-18-00460.pdf>

Only 13% of all funding nationwide went to recovery support services. This is not enough, especially since individuals who have successfully undergone treatment for substance use disorders (SUD) often require long-term recovery support services. 21 states and territories allocated less than 5% of their funds to recovery support services. 10 of these states allocated ZERO dollars to recovery support, and 5 more allocated less than 1%. Treatment is short-term, recovery is long-term. Investments must reflect that.

Chairman Pallone’s home state of New Jersey is an exception, however, as it allocated 48.8% of its STR funds to recovery support services. This is an excellent example of how a state is making an investment in the infrastructure needed to sustain recovery for the long-term. The investment supports recovery community organizations which are the hub of support in local communities. Many of these organizations are employing the peer recovery coaches who are deployed to emergency departments, drug courts, child welfare agencies and other settings.

It's important to understand the critical role that recovery community organizations have in providing essential support to individuals and families. These non-profit community-based organizations are led and run by communities of recovery. Not only are they employing thousands of people in recovery to provide peer recovery coaching and other evidence-based peer support services during the national COVID-19 pandemic, they are also helping people find and maintain housing and employment, repair relationships, and gain access to education and health care. The participants of RCO programs are clients in treatment, drug courts, child welfare, emergency departments, and many are returning from jails and prisons. RCOs provide a safety net of boots-on-the-ground connections with a network of people who have similar lived experiences. They are trained professionals and a valuable part of the addiction workforce. Without the set-aside, there will be no consistency across states and no requirement for them to fund recovery support services.

2. Congress can also support the recovery community by increasing Federal funding for the Building Communities of Recovery (BCOR) grant program from \$8 million to \$25 million. This will provide resources for organizations to provide peer recovery support services in states and communities hardest hit by the opioid epidemic. Markedly increasing the amount of money appropriated for the Building Communities of Recovery grant program will build more community capacity for stigma reduction efforts, public awareness campaigns and creating recovery-ready communities. SAMHSA's Funding Opportunity Announcement for the BCOR program in 2019 only funded 3 grants.

<https://www.samhsa.gov/grants/grant-announcements/ti-19-003>

There were many more recovery community organization that applied for BCOR funding grants than were unable to receive funding.

3. Congress can also support the recovery community by ensuring that the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration continue their support for Recovery Month. This national observance began 31 years ago and is held every September to educate Americans that substance use treatment can enable those with substance use disorders to live healthy and rewarding lives. This observance celebrates the millions of Americans who are in recovery from substance use disorders, reminding us that treatment is effective, and that people can and do recover. It also serves to help reduce the stigma and misconceptions that cloud public understanding of substance use disorders, potentially discouraging others from seeking help. We ask for Congress's support to encourage SAMHSA to elevate the role and impact of Recovery Month. <https://www.recoverymonth.gov/about-recovery-month>